

Programme for
Conference on 'Folk Belief and Traditions of the
Supernatural' & 'The Supernatural in Literature and Film'
Longyearbyen, Svalbard, 20-23 January 2017

Note: All presentations will take place at the Radisson Blu Polar Spitsbergen Hotel.

20 January 2017

15:45-19:00: *Visit to Coal Mine:* Meet in lobby of Radisson.

20:00: *Dinner:* Meet in lobby of Radisson.

21 January 2017

09:45-15:00: *Hike in the Polar Night:* Delegates can pack their own lunches from the hotel buffet during breakfast. Meet in lobby of Radisson.

18:30: *Dinner:* Kroa (500 m walk). Meet in lobby of Radisson. Dinner itself starts at 19:00.

22 January 2017

10:00-10:15

Session 1: **Introduction** (André Sal A)

10:00: Conference introduction by **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark) & **Tommy Kuusela** (Institute for Language & Folklore, Sweden).

10:15-10:30: Break

10:30-12:30

Session 2a: **Folklore and Remoteness** (André Sal A)

Chair: **Carolyne Larrington** (University of Oxford, England)

10:30: **Lizanne Henderson** (University of Glasgow, Scotland) **Witchcraft and Shamanism in Northern Communities: A View from Scotland.**

11:00: **London Brickley** (University of Missouri-Columbia, USA) **Isolated Mutations: The Folklore of Remote Science and Inbred Genetics.**

11:30: **Judith Jesch** (University of Nottingham, England) **Runes in Dark Places.**

12:00: **Shawn Mitchell** (Arizona State University, USA) **If You Take the Zombies out of the Islands, Do You Take the Islands out of the Zombies?**

Session 2b: **Supernatural Motifs in Literature and Film 1** (André Sal B)

Chair: **Agata Marta Lubowicka** (University of Gdansk, Poland)

10:30: **Kendra Wilson** (University of Turku, Finland) **Incidental Supernatural, Genre and National Branding in Icelandic Film.**

11:00: **Gerður Halldóra Sigurðardóttir** (University of Iceland, Iceland) **The Magic of Doctor Who: Explaining the Unfathomable.**

11:30: **Britt Johanne Farstad** (University of Gävle, Sweden) **Let Us Compare Mythologies: The Raven Rings and Their Norse Myths.**

12:00: **Jessica Folio** (University of Reunion Island, Réunion - France) **Stephen King's Narratives or the Centrality of Peripherally.**

12:30-14:30: Lunch Break

14:30-16:30

Session 3a: **Supernatural Geographies** (André Sal A)

Chair: **Kendra Wilson** (University of Turku, Finland)

14:30: **Sandra Lantz** (University of Gävle, Sweden) **Wicked Waters and Wandering Spirits: Folk Beliefs and Rituals in Vietnamese Whale Worship.**

15:00: **Jaap Timmer** (Macquarie University, Australia) **Resolving the Darkness and Remoteness of the Solomon Islands.**

15:30: **Martin Sejer Danielsen** (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) **Bordering the Supernatural.**

16:00: **Keith Eggener** (University of Oregon, USA) **Dangerous Digs: The Sentient House and the Smart Building.**

Session 3b: **Supernatural Motifs in Literature and Film 2** (André Sal B)

Chair: **Judith Jesch** (University of Nottingham, England)

14:30: **Ingrid Urberg** (University of Alberta – Augustana Campus, Canada) **Ancestral Spirits as Guides in the Alaskan and Yukon Wilds: Navigating Boundaries between Genders and Species.**

15:00: **Cathy Greenhalgh** (Independent Researcher, UK) **Dark Musing and the Magic Mirror: Cinematographers' Aesthetic and Dramatic Use of Darkness.**

15:30: **Agata Marta Lubowicka** (University of Gdansk, Poland) **From the Heart of Darkness to the Heart of Light: A Modern Shaman's Trip in a Space Marked by Postcoloniality.**

16:00: **Carolyn Larrington** (University of Oxford, England) **Winter is Always Already Here: Figuring the Supernatural North in G.R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and HBO's *Game of Thrones*.**

17:45: *Dinner:* Coal Miners' Grill (2.5 km walk). Meet in lobby of Radisson. Dinner itself starts at 19:00.

23 January 2017

10:00-12:00:

Session 4a: **Troublesome Spirits?** (André Sal A)

Chair: **Jaap Timmer** (Macquarie University, Australia)

10:00: **Tommy Kuusela** (Institute for Language and Folklore, Uppsala, Sweden) **Traffic Incidents Blamed on Supernatural Beings in Present-Day Sweden.**

10:30: **Chiara Benati** (University of Genova, Italy) **Germanic Folks Beliefs for Preventing Theft as well as for Identifying and Punishing Robbers.**

11:00: **Bryony Milliken** (University of Dundee, Scotland) **The Werewolf and the Modern Social Imaginary: What their Relationship Reveals.**

11:30: **Ashok Verma** (BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, India) **Construction of the *Kabutara* Identity through Folk Belief: Reading Maitreyi Pushpa's *Alma Kabutari*.**

Session 4b: **Marginalised Perspectives on the Supernatural in Literature and Film** (André Sal B)

Chair: **Pauline Greenhill** (University of Winnipeg, Canada)

10:00: **Pauline Greenhill** (University of Winnipeg, Canada) **Natural and Supernatural: Magical and Social (Neo)Realisms in *Le piège d'Issoudun* and *The Juniper Tree*.**

- 10:30: **Evan Wicklund** (University of Winnipeg, Canada) **Feminist Disability Reflections on the Vampire Subject: Otherness, Deviance and Desire in the Horror Films *Nosferatu* and *Let the Right One In*.**
- 11:00: **Anneliese Hatton** (University of Nottingham, England) **‘This is Apparently What the Dead Do’: Supernatural Activities in Rural Portugal.**
- 11:30: **Himanshu Parmar** (BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, India) **Integration of Folk Belief and the Principle of ‘Mahar’ Life in *The Prisons We Broke*.**

12:00- 14:00: Lunch Break

14:00-15:30

Session 5a: **Folk Belief and the Supernatural in the Irish Experience** (André Sal A)

Chair: **Tommy Kuusela** (Institute for Language & Folklore, Sweden)

14:00: **Ciaran McDonough** (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) **“There is Still Plenty of Fun, Frolic, and Folk-Lore in the West”: Folk Belief in the West of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, as Evidenced by the Ordnance Survey Letters.**

14:30: **Eavan O’Dochartaigh** (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) **“The Good Ship Trembled”: The Supernatural of the Franklin Search Expeditions (1847-59) and Its Modern-Day Manifestation.**

15:00: **Anne Karhio** (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) **“Blacker than the Blackest Swans”: Finnish Folk Tradition and the Irish Literary Imagination.**

Session 5b: **“It’s Alive!”: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Popular Culture** (André Sal B)

Chair: **Ingrid Urberg** (University of Alberta – Augustana Campus, Canada)

14:00: **Heidi Kosonen** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Haunted: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Taboo – Mediating Cinematic Representations of Suicide.**

14:30: **Essi Varis** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Whither Does This Senseless Curiosity Lead Us?: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Graphic Frankenstein Adaptations.**

15:00: **Susanne Ylönen** (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Riddikulus!: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Children’s Culture.**

15:30-15:45: Break

15:45-16:00

Session 6: **Conclusion** (André Sal A)

15:45: Conference conclusion by **Adam Grydehøj** (Island Dynamics, Denmark) & **Tommy Kuusela** (Institute for Language & Folklore, Sweden).

18:30: *Dinner:* Vinterhagen (750 m walk). Meet in lobby of Radisson. Dinner itself starts at 19:00.

Abstracts

Chiara Benati (University of Genova, Italy) **Germanic Folks Beliefs for Preventing Theft as well as for Identifying and Punishing Robbers.** Defense of property has always been one of the main concerns of human beings. For this reason, along with Medieval and Early Modern regulations punishing this crime, a series of charms, ordeals and other rituals involving supernatural help against theft have been preserved. These can, according to their purpose, be divided into three groups: those aimed at preventing theft from taking place; those aimed at recovering the stolen property; and finally those aimed at identifying, and – in some cases – punishing the person responsible for the crime. Some of these rituals included the use of instruments, such as sieves and spindles, while other required to paint the so-called “eye of Abraham” on a wall and to strike or hit it with a hammer or sharp object, in order to make the thief’s eye water or, in the worst case, be put out. In this paper I will focus on Medieval and Early Modern charms against thieves describing these and other rituals in the Germanic language area, on the basis of a wide corpus of English, German and Scandinavian texts. In this, particular attention will be paid to those texts and traditions, such as the Low German ones, which are usually only marginally, if at all, mentioned in the existing studies on Medieval charms and magic.

Biography: Chiara Benati is Associate Professor of Germanic Philology at the University of Genoa, Italy, where she teaches both Old High German language and literature and Scandinavian Language History. She has published, among others, essays on the Middle Low German influence of the phraseology of the oldest Swedish written sources, on the Middle High German Dietrich epic and its reception in Scandinavia and on the Faroese language and literature. Her current research interests include specialized terminology in the earliest (Low) German surgical treatises and charms and blessings in the Middle Low German medical tradition. E-mail: chibena@tin.it

London Brickley (University of Missouri-Columbia, USA) **Isolated Mutations: The Folklore of Remote Science and Inbred Genetics.** The back roads and dense thickets of rural America are the place of incumbent horror. From tales of abandoned asylum patients in the New England wood, ostracized, inbred, and mutated mountain dwellers in Appalachia, and homicidal cannibals inhabiting nuclear test sites from Arkansas to Arizona, regional folklore across The U.S. presents a vast array of folk narratives fixated on the fear of the forgotten people that dwell in the most remote crevices of the American landscape. Although the cultural components of each rural folk tradition are unique to its topographic surroundings, these folk figures collectively share a common identity of aberrant biology born from their insular seclusion. Whether the experimental modification of reckless science, or the natural mutations of inbred DNA, folktales of rural/remote isolation demonstrate a deep preoccupation with the effects seclusion might have on a confined population down to its genetic core—effects which paradoxically result in bodies that are at once less than, and yet supersede the abilities of, the human form. This presentation explores the strange relationship forged between “science” and the supernatural in American folktales of rural isolation, with particular emphasis given to the mystical/metaphysical nature of the biological mutations ascribed to severely isolated communities.

Biography: London Brickley is a doctoral student of folklore and cybernetics at the University of Missouri—Columbia, where she also teaches a variety of culture, film, and literature courses. Her primary research interests and publications focus on depictions of science, sexuality, and monstrosity in popular culture. Her most recent ethnographic work among medical fetish subcultures and the transgressive power of role-play appears as the

ninth chapter of UPM's *Diagnosing Folklore* (November, 2015). E-mail: londonbrickley@gmail.com

Martin Sejer Danielsen (University of Copenhagen, Denmark) **Bordering the Supernatural.** According to Timothy R. Tangherlini (2013), people in 19th-Century rural Denmark believed the landscape was inhabited by supernatural beings and threats to the community, and these phenomena were commonly situated outside the space where people lived or in the liminal space (cf. Victor Turner's concept of 'liminality') between the inside and the outside. But Tangherlini also describes the difficulties which often occur when one wishes to locate place-names mentioned in legends, because local names for mounds, hills, bogs, stones etc. are not easily found on standard place-name lists.

In my position as researcher in the Name Research Section at University of Copenhagen, I have all the archives, maps and skills needed to locate place-names within Denmark. Taking as my point of departure legends and place-names from the Danish island Samsø, I have identified and located most named places believed to be (or have been) the location of supernatural beings or other similar phenomena from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. My results support the idea that liminal spaces, e.g. administrative borders, serve as the place of supernatural threats.

Biography: Martin Sejer Danielsen holds an MA in Danish language and is currently in the position as a PhD fellow associated with the Name Research Section at University of Copenhagen in Denmark. In his PhD project Danielsen is investigating the relationship between place-names and legends, focusing especially on explanatory elements of place-name origins. E-mail: sejer@hum.ku.dk

Keith Eggener (University of Oregon, USA) **Dangerous Digs: The Sentient House and the Smart Building.** There is in Anglo-American literature a subgenre of horror focused on buildings as evil—not the passive realm of ghosts, but malign agents themselves. Through some flaw in design, such buildings manifest an injurious awareness targeting occupants. Such architectural sentience was central to Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), and later still, to Anne Rivers Siddons' *The House Next Door* (1978) and Philip Kerr's *The Gridiron* (1995). In these and other stories, buildings--whether old or new, house or office, built badly or simply bad--are like psychoanalytic subjects whose dark dream worlds have surfaced and taken over, wreaking havoc all around.

Scholars have discussed these and related stories as commentaries on everything from gender and race relations to the stresses associated with home improvement. Here I will consider them in relation to largely submerged anxieties around modern architecture and organicism. While buildings may be analogous to organisms, only recently—through cybernetics, synthetic biology, etc.—have designers begun incorporating living organisms into built fabric and raising real questions and concerns about where animate and inanimate matter divide. This paper will pursue this theme and its implications, drawing on work in fiction and literary studies, architecture, biology, and bioethics.

Biography: Keith Eggener is Marion Dean Ross Professor of Architectural History at the University of Oregon. He holds a PhD in art history from Stanford University and is the author of several books, essays, reviews, and book chapters on North American modern art, architecture, landscape, urban design, cinema, photography, and material culture. E-mail: keggener@uoregon.edu

Britt Johanne Farstad (University of Gävle, Sweden) **Let Us Compare Mythologies: The Raven Rings and Their Norse Myths.** Siri Pettersen's fantasy novels *The Raven Rings* (*Odin's Child* 2014, *The Roth* 2015, *The Might* 2015) are very interesting in our time. *The*

Raven Rings have been published, translated into many foreign languages and will be turned into a major film. Pettersen's fans are drawing, knitting, sewing, tattooing and sharing their creations online. Die-hard fans of her books have a remarkable age span, which can be claimed to be the true mark of crossover books. The fans are dedicated and creative. At the same time, 'everybody' is watching enormous film productions like *Vikings*, *Game of Thrones* and *Outlander*. The series are based on kinds of historical myths, 'facts' mixed up with fantasy, magic and/or time travel. *The Raven Rings* and *Outlander* share some important themes of interest.

My research interest in the books is to study Pettersen's reuse of ancient myths and what she makes of them in her modern, urban fantasy novels. Why are writers and film producers turning to myths and pretechnological times in our time where technique almost is parts of our physical bodies? Pettersen's novels are built on old fashioned ideas about honor, blood and family heritage stretching back to ancient times – where ravens are messengers between human beings, other beings and their ancient Norse gods. Stones are 'portals' where protagonists can move between worlds far apart.

Biography: Britt Farstad (1961), Senior Lecturer, Ph.D. in Literature. Faculty of Education and Business Studies, Department of Humanities. Dissertation: "The Glass Bead Player: New Worlds, Ethics and Androcentrism in Peter Nilson's Science Fiction Novels". Philosophy, literature, technology and didactic are my main interests as a teacher and researcher. I have written a few articles about "transhumanism" and are working on articles and some new projects in the area of literature/technology/ethics of science. E-mail: Britt.J.Farstad@hig.se

Jessica Folio (University of Reunion Island, Réunion - France) **Stephen King's Narratives or the Centrality of Peripherally.** In *The Dark Tower* series, King's protagonist Roland Deschain declares: "there are other worlds than these." King's texts are indeed about the crushing of borders and about being engulfed within in-betweenness. This paper first considers the supernatural through the looking-glass of remoteness and peripherality by envisioning the theme of spatiality in such narratives as *The Shining*, *Desperation*, *It*, *Revival*, 'The reach,' 'N' or 'The Children of the Corn'. A crack in the common set of signifiers is followed by the invasion of the ungraspable. In loci of indeterminacy, the perception of the human body itself is at stake. It is made peripheral because it is changed into an object of desire to which monstrous creatures are repeatedly driven to. The supernatural, peripheral body is changed into a place of passage that can be revisited through the Lacanian Lamella, the irrepressible life of the drive energy that leaves a persistent trail beyond the circuit of generation and corruption. In King's texts, the body is corrupted, taken away from the centre of language; the omnipresence of a pre-subject substance contaminates the body of the texts themselves, compelling the reader to return to unresolved fissures.

Biography: After exploring in my PhD thesis the circumvolutions of Stephen King's *Thinner*, Peter Straub's *Shadowland* and Chuck Palahniuk's *Lullaby*, I situated myself on the paradigm of fragmentation and transgression to continue studying the triad postmodernism, Gothic and abjection. My articles unveil a questioning on the body transformed into an Id machine, on the mingling of the immoral and the unthought or on the very pleasure of reading verging on a climax for those who let themselves be carried away by the monstration of the non-exhaustion of the body in postmodern Gothic literature. E-mail: pearljess97429@gmail.com

Cathy Greenhalgh (Independent Researcher, UK) **Dark Musing and the Magic Mirror: Cinematographers' Aesthetic and Dramatic Use of Darkness.** This presentation paper explores cinematographic use of darkness and chiaroscuro effects in feature film drama shot primarily in exterior snow locations or underground. Feelings about the dark are manipulated

by the cinematographer's visual strategy to create the world of the film narrative. For example; darkened foregrounds and edges of frame, silhouette and contre-jour, extreme contrast and blackout are used to isolate characters, create foreboding and uncertainty, conceal and create fear, signify troubled emotion, combine with mysterious, obscuring weather etc. Aesthetic practices discussed are based on 1) observations and interviews with feature film cinematographers from a substantial ethnographic study and 2) the author's own artist film works shot in Iceland, which involved research on northern light and monochromatic colour, and myths related to Sedna, Arctic shamanism and Seid witchcraft. The sublime nature of "dark picturesque" painting traditions influencing cinematography are derived from the use of obsidian mirrors and camera obscura. Collective magical and folk myths relating visions/dreams/supernatural happenings out of the darkness underline our screen audience experience and what we can "see" and hear in the dark. Brief cinematographic examples will be used from *Smilla's Sense of Snow*, *The Ice Storm*, *Chronicles of Narnia*, *The Revenant*, and *The 33*.

Biography: Cathy Greenhalgh is a film-maker, lecturer, media anthropologist and writer with over thirty years teaching, education consultancy, management, research expertise, latterly as Principal Lecturer in Film and Television at University of the Arts London. She spent fifteen years as a professional cinematographer in the film and commercials industries, and conducted ethnographic research with feature film cinematographers (1995-2016 ongoing). She directs and shoots films with elements of choreography, animation and documentary for cinema, gallery and museum spaces. Research interests and publications centre on filmmaking practices and communities of practice, cinematographic phenomena and aesthetics. E-mail: cathygreenhalghcinema@gmail.com

Pauline Greenhill (University of Winnipeg, Canada) **Natural and Supernatural: Magical and Social (Neo)Realisms in *Le piège d'Issoudun* and *The Juniper Tree*.** These very different films, by Quebec director Micheline Lanctôt (2003) and American director Nietzchka Keene (1990), are feminist adaptations and versions of traditional tale type ATU 720, 'The Juniper Tree'. *Le piège* addresses the inchoate desperation of an early twenty-first century privileged woman, juxtaposing a play based on the Grimm version of ATU 720 with a neorealist story evoking the same narrative, set in suburban Quebec, Canada. Keene's *Juniper* is a transcultural (an American writer, director, editor, and producer, filming a German version of an international tale in Iceland with Icelandic actors speaking English) exploration of fraught family relations in a historical realist setting, incorporating elements of traditional magic. Lanctôt's rendition addresses the complexities of the culturally tabooed subject of child murder by mothers--maternal filicide--without offering pat psychological or sociological explanations. It benefits from an understanding of feminist analysis of maternal filicide, as does Keene's film, which invokes stepmother Katla's and her sister Margit's supernatural links with their own dead mother, as well as with Katla's stepson Jonas, whose own mother has died. I explore how the cinematic renditions of the natural and supernatural Northern settings enhance the films' expressions of melancholia, anger, and despair.

Biography: Pauline Greenhill is Professor of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Her recent books are *Fairy-Tale Films Beyond Disney: International Perspectives* (co-edited with Jack Zipes and Kendra Magnus-Johnston, 2016); *Channeling Wonder: Fairy Tales on Television* (co-edited with Jill Terry Rudy, 2014); *Unsettling Assumptions: Tradition, Gender, Drag* (co-edited with Diane Tye, 2014); *Transgressive Tales: Queering the Grimms* (co-edited with Kay Turner, 2012); *Fairy Tale Films: Visions of Ambiguity* (co-edited with Sidney Eve Matrix, 2010); and *Make the Night Hideous: Four English Canadian Charivaris, 1881-1940* (2010). E-mail: p.greenhill@uwinnipeg.ca

Anneliese Hatton (University of Nottingham, England) **‘This is Apparently What the Dead Do’: Supernatural Activities in Rural Portugal.** This paper will involve a close analysis of contemporary Portuguese author valter hugo mãe’s 2010 short story, ‘dona malva and senhor josé ferreiro’. Superficially, it appears to be a traditional story of the supernatural, with the dead apparently invading the world of the living in macabre ways. However, mãe is examining much deeper socio-historical issues through this tale, in particular the treatment of single women in the traditional, rural areas of Portugal away from their more progressive urban counterparts, and how any transgression from supposedly normal behaviour leads to marginalisation from the community. Without doubt, the ghosts in this story ‘rupture the socio-spatio-temporal membrane of society and [...] operate as traces of subaltern trauma’ (Bloom, 2007, p. 87), and mãe’s portrayal leaves the reader questioning whether it is really possible to move on from the past or whether it remains omnipresent, a particularly pressing question as Portugal is attempting to deal with the ‘ghosts’ of its recent dictatorial and imperial experiences.

Biography: Anneliese Hatton is an AHRC/Midlands3Cities doctoral candidate in Lusophone and Portuguese Studies at the University of Nottingham. Her thesis is entitled ‘Images of the Subaltern: Representations of Contemporary Portuguese Identity in the novels of valter hugo mãe’, and is examining how literary representations influence the formation of national identity. She has previously obtained an MA by Research in Hispanic Studies at the University of Birmingham in the field of contemporary Portuguese culture and literature, focussing on the work of Mário de Carvalho. E-mail: asxah4@nottingham.ac.uk

Lizanne Henderson (University of Glasgow, Scotland) **Witchcraft and Shamanism in Northern Communities: A View from Scotland.** ‘Shamanism’ has, in recent years, become a catch-all phrase for many types of folk beliefs and practices. Shamanism has traditionally been associated with the north, which is itself often regarded as a magical place; the home of monsters, fairies and witches. Since classical times the north has been viewed as wild and savage. In Arctic Norway and Sweden, the homelands of the Sámi people were often regarded as barbarous, uncivilized places, while in a Scottish context the Highland and Gaelic-speaking region and the Northern Isles of Orkney and Shetland were viewed by Lowlanders with disdain and suspicion. Scotland and the cultural region of Sápmi shared in common a reputation for magic and witchcraft, as evidenced in sixteenth to eighteenth century texts. This paper will investigate the supposed connection between shamanism and witchcraft in Early Modern Scotland. Do Scottish witch confessions exhibit evidence of a shamanistic culture, as has been recently claimed? Is shamanism a suitable terminology when addressing Scottish witch trial evidence? What comparisons can be drawn with other northern communities? Furthermore, what relationship did shamans and witches have with the land and northern landscapes? As peripheral figures witches were identified by contemporaries as outsiders, inhabiting remote spaces, in both a social and geographical sense. Was this stereotype also applied to the shaman?

Biography: Dr Lizanne Henderson is a cultural historian, School of Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Glasgow. She has published widely on supernatural belief, witch-hunts, ballads, slavery, polar exploration, and critical animal studies. Her most recent monograph is *Witchcraft and Folk Belief in the Age of Enlightenment: Scotland, 1670-1740* (Palgrave, 2016). Lizanne was Visiting International Scholar at University of Melbourne in 2014, has worked on expedition ships around UK and Arctic regions since 2005, and is Editor of *Review of Scottish Culture*. She is working on animals in the witch trials, Scottish charmers, and a multi-disciplinary project called *Picturing Polar Bears*, about tourism, cultural history,

artistic depictions and semiotic uses of the arctic's most iconic animal. E-mail: lizanne.henderson@glasgow.ac.uk

Judith Jesch (University of Nottingham, England) **Runes in Dark Places.** In both Norway and Orkney there are medieval graffiti in runes, found in mounds, caves and other dark or inaccessible places, usually left by travellers. Many of these are just names or other formulaic or banal writings, but some of the inscriptions give insights into the innermost thoughts of these travellers, and the tales they took with them on their journeys. The inscriptions hint at a culture of oral storytelling regarding giants and other supernatural beings, journeys to the far north, hidden treasure and other legendary motifs, a popular culture that precedes the recording of similar stories in medieval Icelandic manuscripts. These implied stories reveal some of the hopes and fears of the medieval traveller in unfamiliar places.

Biography: Judith Jesch is Professor of Viking Studies and Director of the Centre for the Study of the Viking Age at the University of Nottingham. She is the author of *Women in the Viking Age* (1991), *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age* (2001) and *The Viking Diaspora* (2015), as well as of numerous articles on Old Norse poetry, sagas and runic inscriptions. judith.jesch@nottingham.ac.uk

Anne Karhio (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) **“Blacker than the Blackest Swans”: Finnish Folk Tradition and the Irish Literary Imagination.** In “The Celtic Element in Literature”, W. B. Yeats drew on the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, first published in 1835, and translated into English in 1888. For Yeats, the *Kalevala* exemplified body of folk literature, superstition and belief of “the old ways”, preceding both Celtic and Scandinavian mythology. The tales also revealed a primeval, natural magic underlying all folk literatures, and were incorporated into the poet's own mythologized historical narrative. Since the late 19th century, Yeats and others have been drawn to the parallels between Finnish and Irish history, colonial experience and folk traditions, as well as the exoticism of the geographically and culturally remote Finland. Against this backdrop, this presentation will examine the uses of Finnish folk belief by Irish authors, in particular W.B. Yeats and Michael Hartnett, whose long poem “Sibelius in Silence” focuses on the Finnish composer's struggle with depression and creativity, exemplified by the “blackest swan” of the *Kalevala*'s mythological underworld. In particular, it argues that Irish poets' understandings, and misunderstandings, of Finnish folk mythology are informed by their attitudes towards Ireland's own indigenous tradition.

Biography: Anne Karhio is a holder of the Irish Research Council's ELEVATE International Career Development Postdoctoral Fellowship, co-funded by Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. Her project on new media technologies and representations of landscape in contemporary Irish poetry is carried out at the University of Bergen, Norway, and the National University of Ireland, Galway. She is a co-editor of *Crisis and Contemporary Poetry* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2011) and the author of a number of critical essays on recent Irish poetry. She is completing the manuscript for a monograph “Slight Return”: Paul Muldoon's Poetics of Place (Peter Lang, forthcoming 2016). E-mail: anne.karhio@nuigalway.ie

Heidi Kosonen (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Haunted: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Taboo – Mediating Cinematic Representations of Suicide.** My contribution to our dialogic workshop comes from the fields of social anthropology and visual cultural studies, and offers the concept of the taboo as one of its theoretical starting points. When this ‘exotic phenomenon’ was discovered by the Western scholars under the paradigm of social evolution, it was classified ‘irrational and ‘superstitious’, which has largely affected the way the taboo is viewed in our time. However,

as we reach beyond the popular, westernized definition of the taboo as a form of discursive suppression, it becomes evident that the taboo is, in effect, a societal structure inseparably tied to the carnival and its unruly forces. Thus, the taboo is linked to the folklore-circulating popular culture through such concepts as myth and stigma. I illustrate its mythologizing and stigmatizing effects by focusing on the cinematic representations of suicide and observing the circulation of medical and superstitious elements that often riddle the representations and rationalizations of this form of death, which is often construed as 'irrational,' 'sinful' and 'bad'. All this shows that the taboo continually occasions a vivid entertainment culture bristling with transgressive depictions, which, still in the contemporary era, are connected to folklore and abound in superstition, prohibition and prejudice.

Biography: Heidi Kosonen, M.A. of Art History, works as a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Art and Culture Studies, University of Jyväskylä. She is currently in the process of finishing her doctoral thesis 'The Visual Taboo: Sexuality, Death and Bodily Control in the Postmodern Image Culture,' (2012-2016) in which she observes the taboo at the intersection of cultural anthropology and visual cultural studies, and proposes a re-evaluation of the concept perceived as antithetical to discourse. Kosonen has studied the taboo particularly in the visual representations of suicide and the moral panics connecting LGBTQ sexualities to the child. E-mail: heidi.s.kosonen@jyu.fi

Tommy Kuusela (Institute for Language and Folklore, Uppsala, Sweden) **Traffic Incidents Blamed on Supernatural Beings in Present-Day Sweden.** Since the year 2000, a large number of traffic incidents have occurred on the freeway next to the mountain Skarvberget, north of the town of Gävle in Sweden. In total, the number amounts to 59 different cases of difficult accidents, and the number would be far greater if reports of minor accidents or accounts of uncanny feelings were taken into consideration. Skarvberget is a part of Ödmården, a region with a rich history that goes back to the middle ages. Some people in the district have an explanation for the misfortunes and they believe that it is caused by the hidden people (Swedish: *vittra*), supernatural beings living underneath the ground. According to these narratives, the hidden people are angered at the motorway that crosses their dwellings and lashes out in anger at the humans. This explanation could be read in many Swedish newspapers in 2014, although it was reported with some irony.

In this paper, I will examine the different reports and compare them with older folklore accounts from the area, and put the given explanations into a wider context. I will also look into similar reports from Iceland, where supernatural beings (Icelandic: *huldufólk*) have been reported to act out and hinder constructions of roads and buildings. Records of this kind of conflict are mentioned as early as the Icelandic Sagas. A brief summary of the hidden people (Swedish: *vittra, vättar, de underjordiska*) in Swedish folklore will be presented as well.

Biography: Tommy Kuusela is a PhD Fellow in History of religions at Stockholm University and works as a Research Archivist at the Institute for Language and Folklore in Uppsala. He is currently working on a dissertation on the interaction between giants and gods from the perspective of a hall culture in Old Norse mythology, which will be defended in 2017. He has published articles on animals, Old Norse religion, as well as Swedish folk tradition, and on J. R. R. Tolkien. He is the co-editor of *Folk Belief and Traditions of the Supernatural* (Beewolf Press 2016). E-mail: tommy.kuusela@sprakochfolkminnen.se

Sandra Lantz (University of Gävle, Sweden) **Wicked Waters and Wandering Spirits: Folk Beliefs and Rituals in Vietnamese Whale Worship.** Vietnamese Whale Worship is acknowledged and widespread mainly among the fishermen and is believed to be connected to Cham culture and Khmer civilization since cult objects and places of worship coincide throughout time; prominent temple sites for whale worshipping are located on former Cham

strongholds. The worship is centered upon Cá Ông, the Whale God; personified physically in the shape of whales. Fishermen center their beliefs upon legends and historical events, which find support in personal encounters with the god. Stranded whales are greeted with respect and whale funerals are carried out according to tradition. Whale worship is linked to ancestor worship and animistic expressions why the Whale God represents more than a divine mammal and a supreme deity of the sea. The protection at sea, for which the fishermen pray, is one part of an intricate set of beliefs concerning whale worship; as is the rescuing of wandering spirits. This paper will seek to elucidate the rituals and practices connected to the rescuing and calming of wandering spirits of the sea and the parrying of malevolent beings that embrace the dark waters.

Biography: I hold a permanent position since 2013 as a university adjunct in the department of Religious Studies at the University of Gävle, Sweden. I teach religious history (i.e. Asian cultures and traditions, Myths, rituals and symbols, Mystery cults etc.) and didactics. I hold an MA in Religious Studies, an MA in Education for the Upper Secondary School as well as archaeological and anthropological fieldwork courses and experiences. My main interest is folk beliefs, myths, and rituals through history. I have conducted fieldwork in Vietnam for four months, studying whale worship. E-mail: sandra.lantz@hig.se

Carolyne Larrington (University of Oxford, England) **Winter is Always Already Here: Figuring the Supernatural North in G.R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and HBO's *Game of Thrones*.** G.R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* and HBO's *Game of Thrones* invent, partly out of medieval traditions, a concept of the Far North which evokes particular kinds of supernatural horror. The territory north of the Wall, is no empty Arctic wasteland, home as it is to various tribes of Free Folk, to giants and the elf-like Children of the Forest. Yet in its unforgiving landscapes, a more metaphysical and existential threat allows itself to be glimpsed from the very beginning of the series: the Others or White Walkers. These beings seem to embody the most terrifying aspects of winter; clad in ice-armor and with frozen blue-eyes they bring death, and a paradoxical life-in-death, to the hard landscapes inhabited by humans. This paper will consider the White Walkers both as supernatural and as textual phenomena: highlighting their immediate literary antecedents, their metaphysical implications (including their control of the wights) and the multiple ways in which they are made to signify outside the text and show.

Biography: Carolyne Larrington teaches medieval English and Norse literature at Oxford University. Her research interests are in Norse and Arthurian literature, folktale, myth and legend and medievalism. E-mail: carolyne.larrington@sjc.ox.ac.uk

Agata Marta Lubowicka (University of Gdansk, Poland) **From the Heart of Darkness to the Heart of Light: A Modern Shaman's Trip in a Space Marked by Postcoloniality.** The aim of the paper is to show, how a journey made by the main character Rasmus in the Danish-Greenlandic movie from 1998 titled *Heart of Light* in many respects can be read as a representation of a shaman's traditional trip, although on the surface Rasmus bears no resemblance whatsoever to the proud and wise shamans described by Knud Rasmussen. But Rasmus's journey begins as well in darkness, here being a symbol of the colonial past and according to the co-author of the screenplay, the Greenlandic author Hans Anthon Lynge, still marking the life of Greenlanders in late 1990s. The aim of the journey Rasmus embarks on after a tragedy caused by his son is not clear in the beginning, but, like a trip of a traditional Greenlandic shaman, it ends up in re-establishing of social order and reconciliation in Rasmus's community. In my paper a special attention will be paid to the aesthetics of darkness and light in Jacob Grønlykke's movie in order to show, how it enters into a dialogue with the traditional narratives from within Greenlandic as well Western cultures, and how

they contribute to the possible interpretations of the movie's message, pointing towards new ways of living, right in the heart of light.

Biography: Agata Lubowicka (born 1979) is assistant professor at the Scandinavian Department at the University of Gdansk. Her Ph.D. project was about the ambivalence of the representations of Northern Greenland in Knud Rasmussen's expedition accounts. E-mail: agatalubowicka@yahoo.dk

Ciaran McDonough (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) “**There is Still Plenty of Fun, Frolic, and Folk-Lore in the West**”: **Folk Belief in the West of Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, as Evidenced by the Ordnance Survey Letters.** In nineteenth-century Ireland, the west of Ireland was considered to be a hotbed of folk belief by commentators in Dublin, many of whom published books regarding the amount of folklore to be found in the west. The west was considered the home of the remnants of Ireland's mythical past – the Fir Bolgs and Tuatha Dé Danaan, not to mention its distance from Dublin and the remoteness of its isolated bays and mountainsides. It was a liminal space, which encouraged belief in the supernatural. The Ordnance Survey letters of the 1830s and 1840s recount John O'Donovan's tour of Ireland on foot, collecting antiquarian material. In them he recounts sheer amounts of folk lore, which he collected in the West of Ireland. This paper examines the close relationship between folk belief and remoteness and analyses the findings of the Dublin-centric collectors and their promotion of the 'true Ireland' to be found in the west of Ireland.

Biography: Ciaran McDonough is a Galway Doctoral Research Scholar at the Centre for Irish Studies, National University of Ireland, Galway. Her thesis examines antiquarian research in nineteenth-century Ireland and its influence on cultural nationalism. She has published in *Studi Irlandesi* and *Studia Celtica Fennica*. E-mail: c.mcdonough1@nuigalway.ie

Bryony Milliken (University of Dundee, Scotland) **The Werewolf and the Modern Social Imaginary: What their Relationship Reveals.** In this paper I am going to explore the figure of the werewolf via Charles Taylor's notion of the social imaginary (2003). I will discuss what werewolf folklore reveals about the social imaginary, and how this folklore impacts some of its central concerns, aspirations, and fears. This study is focusing on the werewolf because it is a transformative beast, a hybrid creature, and therefore lends itself well to looking at the transformation and mutations that occur within the social imaginary. There is a rich history to the figure of the werewolf in folklore prior to the twentieth century. Moreover, the figure of the werewolf appears not only in pre-modern folklore narratives, but also in canonical philosophical texts. I will begin with an explanation of the social imaginary, followed by a brief discussion of werewolf folklore throughout the ancient, Viking and medieval periods before entering into a discussion focusing on the werewolf as the outlaw within the Modern Social Imaginary in particular I will be looking at the connection between the werewolf and the paedophile.

Biography: I am a 24-year-old Masters Student in Philosophy at the University of Dundee - I will be graduating in November. I am particularly interested in the Social Imaginary and the Philosophy of Friendship. I have been researching the Social Imaginary and Folklore, my paper argues that the Modern Social Imaginary has replaced the werewolf with the paedophile. I am looking into doing a PhD and will be travelling America from September until December furthering my interest and research in Hybrid Social Imaginaries and Multiple Social Imaginaries. E-mail: b.milliken@dundee.ac.uk

Shawn Mitchell (Arizona State University, USA) **If You Take the Zombies out of the Islands, Do You Take the Islands out of the Zombies?** While the resurging popularity of zombie narratives traces its beginnings to George Romero's 1968 film, *The Night of the Living Dead*, its roots are inexorably connected to 19th century Haiti. Notably, while the word zombie is never used in Romero's film, audiences clearly identified the threat as zombies. How did a creature originally linked to Caribbean island voodoo, change into the dramatically different "ghouls" which shambled around suburban Pittsburgh? In her book, *Consuming the Caribbean*, Mimi Sheller notes that islands are often depicted as: "backwards' places against which processes of modern urbanisation, industrialisation, democratisation, rationalisation, individualization" are examined (2) Zombies are often depicted using these same dichotomies. Marc Leverette argues in his essay, "The Funk of Forty Thousand Years" that the potency of the zombie-apocalypse metaphor is the presentation of a society where these dichotomies are destroyed and "hierarchies all become meaningless (im)possibilities." (203) In other words, if zombies exist then islands cease being "backwards places". My presentation argues that the liminal in-between-ness zombies share with island places is a defining part of their identity. So, while zombies may travel, they can never be separated from their island pedigree, and instead create new islands wherever they go.

Biography: Shawn Mitchell is a graduate student finishing his PhD in rhetoric and literacies at Arizona State University. Previously he was a film editor whose work has won awards at Cannes, CineVegas and the Orlando, Nashville and St. Louis Film Festivals. Currently, he is a residential faculty member at the Scottsdale School of Film and Theatre and a Faculty Associate at Arizona State University. His research interests include film and editing theory, media literacy, zombies and Pokémon. E-mail: spmitch1@asu.edu

Eavan O'Dochartaigh (National University of Ireland, Galway, Ireland) **"The Good Ship Trembled": The Supernatural of the Franklin Search Expeditions (1847-59) and Its Modern-Day Manifestation.** Between 1847 and 1859, thirty-two maritime expeditions took part in the search for Sir John Franklin and his crew, who had vanished in the Canadian Arctic in a bid to discover the Northwest Passage. Many of these expeditions were under the auspices of the British Admiralty and included men from Ireland. While those involved in the searches can be seen a transient community, some of the ships spent several years in the Canadian Arctic archipelago, establishing winter quarters in localities that were often far-removed from the possibility of social interaction with the native Inuit. In Britain and Ireland, the extreme darkness and isolation of the Arctic in winter was a well-known feature that was used to exemplify the supernatural and otherworldly atmosphere of the region, which became associated with danger and the sublime. However, the expedition members themselves produced extensive artistic and literary material that often shows winter in a more benign light. Despite this, the more otherworldly Arctic of the nineteenth-century has become firmly embedded in the way in which tales of exploration are consumed in the twenty-first century.

Biography: Eavan O'Dochartaigh is an Irish Research Council Scholar in the Department of English at NUI Galway. Her Ph.D. researches Arctic imagery in the nineteenth century. She earned her MPhil at Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge. She has worked as an archaeologist and illustrator in Ireland, Britain and Iceland. E-mail: e.odochartaigh1@nuigalway.ie

Himanshu Parmar (BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, India) **Integration of Folk Belief and the Principle of 'Mahar' Life in *The Prisons We Broke*.** 'Folk belief' is a term intrinsically related to superstitions and the exotic. However, it is equally true that these 'superstitions' and 'exotic' aspects have played and still play a pivotal role in cultures, especially those left at the periphery and hence 'unexposed' to the growing impact of mainstream cultures and

scientific trends. The *Mahar* community in India is one such community that has long lived on the margins of the society and has thus developed a folk belief unscathed, largely, by progressive modernism. *The Prisons We Broke* is considered to be the first autobiography in *Marathi* by a Dalit (oppressed) woman and explores this 'brighter' side of *mahar* life and culture. The paper explores this alternative folk belief and culture and its implications on life and value systems as a whole. An attempt shall also be made to elucidate how this folk belief and the subsequent life system offers an alternative 'humanism' to the mainstream Indian cultural and religious 'Hindu' identity.

Biography: Dr Himanshu Parmar is Assistant Professor in the Department of English at BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Haryana, India. E-mail: himanshu@bpswomenuniversity.ac.in

Gerður Halldóra Sigurðardóttir (University of Iceland, Iceland) **The Magic of *Doctor Who*: Explaining the Unfathomable.** The Doctor doesn't believe in ghosts. Or magic. Or anything unfathomable – or in fact that there can possibly be anything unfathomable. The Seventh Doctor (played by Sylvester McCoy) once quoted Arthur C. Clarke that “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic” and indeed, much of what the Doctor does looks like magic to those he meets. What we see as magic he usually explains as alien technology, either his or someone else's. Ghosts and ghouls and things that go bump in the night are, if not alien beings, then time travellers. Even the gods themselves have a 'rational' – or should one say, technological explanation.

What I would like to explore in my presentation is how the television series *Doctor Who* has made use of all kinds of mythology, folklore and supernatural elements, putting them in the context of different technological advancements by various alien species or future humans. Of interest also is the dialogue in *Doctor Who* between explaining strange phenomena – such as those called supernatural – in 'scientific' terms on the one hand and expanding the category of scientific explanations on the other.

Biography: I am a MA student in Applied Folkloristics and Old Norse Religion at the University of Iceland, with a BA in Folkloristics and Ethnography, also from the University of Iceland. My research interests include narratives of all sorts, specially concerning the fantastical and otherworldly; interplay between oral tradition and literature (as well as other forms of storytelling, such as television, movies and even computer games); worldviews and paradigms. E-mail: ghs4@hi.is

Jaap Timmer (Macquarie University, Australia) **Resolving the Darkness and Remoteness of the Solomon Islands.** On the island of Malaita, Solomon Islands, people muse awe-inspiring global geographies and historiographies that resolve the darkness and remoteness to which missionaries doomed Solomon Islands. With the advent of globalisation and neo-liberalism, this island in the Pacific became ever more shadowy and increasingly aloof from enlightened centres. However, through the construction of new geographies and historiographies a Pentecostal movement is opening up new spaces, including a serious engagement with the magic of the state. In this paper I present and discuss the origins of a particular theocratic impulse of this movement to show that it is not obstructed by the widely observed 'complete break with the past' and Pentecostalism's reliance on the working of divine power in the messianic now. The movement's theology evokes and supports state-building from the bottom-up. I argue that this state-building effort challenges the widespread observation that Pentecostal believers are politically quiet. By focusing on the wonderful geographies and the providential historiography of this movement, I show how it brings about the potential and reality of Pentecostal political practice.

Biography: Dr Jaap Timmer is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology, Macquarie University in Sydney. His current research in Solomon Islands focuses on the

wonders and political trajectories of a Pentecostal movement on the island of Malaita. E-mail: jaap.timmer@mq.edu.au

Ingrid Urberg (University of Alberta – Augustana Campus, Canada) **Ancestral Spirits as Guides in the Alaskan and Yukon Wilds: Navigating Boundaries between Genders and Species.** Ancestral spirits play a pivotal role in a number of recent works of North American adult and juvenile fiction which focus on human-canid relationships. Some of these animistic spirits appear in the form of sled dogs, birds or lynx, while others are invisible. Just like sled dogs, these ancestral spirits lead their “humans” through the wilds of Alaska and northern Canada. In addition, they guide the protagonists through complex issues surrounding modernity, gender identity and fluidity, and interspecies relationships. They function as magical agents or helpers, in the language of folklorist Vladimir Propp. A close look at the spirits’ relationality (using Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson’s term) in these texts—that is, the spirits’ presence and explicit or implicit voices in the narratives—sheds light on gender and species boundaries. In this paper, I will focus on Dorris Heffron’s *City Wolves* (2008) and Helen Frost’s *Diamond Willow* (2008), demonstrating the dynamic and experimental ways in which Heffron and Frost use ancestral spirits to both explore gender roles and fluidity and interspecies cooperation, and to challenge conventional gender and species boundaries.

Biography: Ingrid Urberg is Associate Professor of Scandinavian Studies on the Augustana Campus, University of Alberta where she teaches a variety of Norwegian language, Scandinavian literature and Scandinavian culture courses. She received her Ph.D. in Scandinavian literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has studied and lived in Norway for extended periods. Her research focuses on polar literature and northern personal narratives, including Svalbard narratives. She is currently working on the representations of sled dogs in fiction and non-fiction. E-mail: iurberg@ualberta.ca

Essi Varis (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Whither Does This Senseless Curiosity Lead Us?: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Graphic Frankenstein Adaptations.** Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) is an amalgam of contradictory discourses. As the first science fiction novel, it shocked the contemporaries with its secular paradigm. Yet, both Shelley’s and Frankenstein’s creations are steeped in Gothic horror and supernatural romanticism. Although the dramatic imagery of dreams and isolated glaciers suggest fantasy and mystery, Frankenstein’s science is uncannily methodical – so methodical, in fact, that he refuses to reveal any details of his process, lest someone might repeat it. This denial of explanation has launched a frantic search for explanation through popular cultural adaptations. These cumulating sediments have provided ever-new perspectives to reanimation, which has, however, mostly obscured and destabilized the meanings of the tale even further. Moral panics, visual monstrosities and pulp horror tropes have trampled over Frankenstein’s intentions, fears and methods in popular imagination, turning a tale of education and betterment into a superstitious warning against scientific advancement. In my presentation, I demonstrate that these mismatched tendencies of explanation and mystification are also evident in comics that recycle the myth, including *Frankenstein’s Womb* (2009) by Warren Ellis and Marek Oleksicki, and *The Heart of the Beast* (1998) by Dean Motter, Sean Phillips and Judith Dupré.

Biography: Essi Varis works as a comic book researcher and a PhD candidate in literature at the Department of Art and Culture Studies of the University of Jyväskylä. She graduated as Lic.Phil. from the same department in 2013. Her licentiate’s thesis suggested a cognitive theory of comic book characters, which she is currently applying to new contexts in her doctoral compilation dissertation "Graphic Human Experiments: Functions and Cognitive Logics of Characters in Comics" (2017). During her studies, Varis has also organized

interdisciplinary conferences on geek culture and posthumanist art and media. E-mail: essi.e.varis@jyu.fi

Ashok Verma (BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, India) **Construction of the *Kabutara* Identity through Folk Belief: Reading Maitreyi Pushpa's *Alma Kabutari*.** The present paper investigates the role of folk belief in constructing the identity of a particular community in a regional, non-English Indian novel *Alma Kabutari*. As the very title indicates, the community is explicitly mentioned in the name of the protagonist. *Kabutara* is in fact a supposedly criminal tribe of Central India. This paper explores how this construction takes place and leads to the unwitting acceptance of this criminal identity by a marginalized community. Folk belief in the form of superstitions and other unorthodox socio-religious practices play a major role in projecting the marginalized people as more exotic and backward than previously imagined. Various beliefs related to the *Kabutaras* unconsciously cause Mansaram, the upper-class, 'benevolent' master see them as a people beyond redemption. Furthermore, various folk beliefs associated with the *Kabutaras* offer a glimpse not only into how other communities perceive their lives but also how these people actually live their lives and what they regard as important. As such, folk beliefs and practices provide valuable clues as to how people construct their worlds and also how the world is constructed by others and brings meaning to their experiences.

Biography: Dr Ashok Verma is Associate Professor in the Department of English at BPS Mahila Vishwavidyalaya, Haryana, India. E-mail: ashokverma@bpswomenuniversity.ac.in

Evan Wicklund (University of Winnipeg, Canada) **Feminist Disability Reflections on the Vampire Subject: Otherness, Deviance and Desire in the Horror Films *Nosferatu* and *Let the Right One In*.** Filmed nearly a century apart, the quintessential horror films *Nosferatu: Symphony of Horror* (F.W. Murnau, 1922) and *Let the Right One In* (Tomas Alfredson, 2008) share indisputable thematic and atmospheric commonalities, yet encompass imperative discrepancies that differentiate their underlying messages. Maintaining historical, sociological and cultural significance, these creations analyze their super/natural vampire subjects by reflecting on the oppressive state of societal organization, alternately deploying magic and realism. Magical dis/abilities in the primary vampire characters, Count Orlok and Eli, are to a large extent beyond their control. Despite these paranormal embodiments, both characters experience debilitating physical and existential seclusion, victimized as otherworldly through the discourse of public perception and belief. Conducting a comparative analysis of these films, I draw from the works of disability theorists, film studies scholars and feminist academics, to situate vampire bodies as complex and nonconformist, yet objectified through disciplinary control as intrinsically flawed and docile. In short, I will examine these somber and haunting cinematic contributions as important artistic reflections on how society comes to understand disablement, gender and difference by exploring themes of disembodiment, social and physical isolation and human sexuality.

Biography: Evan Wicklund is employed at the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, a research institute in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and has spent a number of years working in the field of disability support, with individuals in employment, residential, education, and advocacy settings. Evan is a pre-Masters student in the Disability Studies Program at the University of Winnipeg and is an Honours graduate of Red River College's Disability and Community Support Program. His research interests include how critical disability theory, postmodernism and gender studies can contribute to analytical forms of art, including film and literature. E-mail: wicklund-e@webmail.uwinnipeg.ca

Kendra Wilson (University of Turku, Finland) **Incidental Supernatural, Genre and National Branding in Icelandic film.** Numerous Icelandic films include brief appearances of supernatural events in otherwise realistic narrative. In many cases, the supernatural is not essential to the plot. For instance, the road movie *Children of Nature* (1989) includes an appearance by an elf woman. In general the possibility of a supernatural event is not problematized or the interpretation of the experience explicitly discussed in the narrative. These incidental supernatural scenes may violate the international conventions of film genres, for instance, when a supernatural element is included in a crime film (*Cold Trail*, 2006). The supernatural intrusions can be related to supernatural events in Old Icelandic sagas and to the idea of magic realism as cultural diplomacy, presenting a culture that accepts certain kinds of supernatural events as plausible to an audience that presumably does not. The incidental supernatural serves as a kind of marker of a national brand, reinforcing the ‘marketing’ of Iceland as a place where belief in elves and ghosts is prevalent. At the same time it makes an oblique contribution to negotiating national identity and a changing belief landscape in contemporary Iceland.

Biography: Kendra Willson is currently Senior Researcher at the Turku Institute of Advanced Studies and the program in Nordic languages at the University of Turku, Finland. Previous posts include the University of Helsinki, University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Manitoba. She holds a Ph.D. in Scandinavian languages and literatures from the University of California, Berkeley. Her research focuses on continuity and change in Icelandic language and culture, including personal names, word order, narrative techniques, metrics, translation and the modern reception of the Old Norse literary heritage. E-mail: kenwil@utu.fi

Susanne Ylönen (University of Jyväskylä, Finland) **Riddikulus!: Constructing and Mystifying the Border between Life and Death in Children’s Culture.** Death and darkness are sources of horror. Together, they have inspired a thriving genre full of supernatural beings that illustrate both our hopes and fears, and our undying fascination with things that surpass rational explanations. While the human interest in all things horrific is not restricted to a certain age, there are age-specific restrictions and limitations regarding the representation of horror. Representations and narratives produced for children tend to control the frightfulness of death and darkness more forcefully than representations and narratives aimed at adults. One way to control these fright-inducing themes is to aestheticize them through such means as cute-talk. Another practical, control-oriented solution is the aesthetic approach that I have, following Carolyn Korsmeyer, termed aesthetic sublation. Korsmeyer brought the “sublate”, a term more common in the field of physics, into the field of art theory in her book *Savoring Disgust* (2011), suggesting it could be used as a counterpoise to the sublime. In this presentation, I aim to discuss the concept of aesthetic sublation in relation to zombies and their portrayal in children’s culture. When applied to children’s culture, I claim, the mechanics of sublation work like a boggart-banishing spell: humor and grotesque exaggeration help to master fear.

Biography: Susanne Ylönen defended her doctoral dissertation *The Fighting Crab Monster: The Aesthetics of Horror in Children’s Culture* at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland on the 5th of March 2016. In her work, she has focused on tracing the aesthetic choices that mark the production and evaluation of horror within discourses such as risk talk, psychologization, peer-cultural meaning-making and cute talk. Currently, she is working on further developing the concept of aesthetic sublation, the disgust-inducing and often humorous portrayal of horrific things. E-mail: sucoylon@student.jyu.fi